

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 21, 2001 LB 92

minutes.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Members of the body, I certainly don't want to be redundant as to what Senator Cudaback has shared with you. But at our hearing before the Judiciary Committee, your committee did in fact hear compelling testimony in support of the addition of a district judge in the 11th District. A few things you can grab hold of. The 11th District has the 17 counties that Senator Cudaback named for you. It is the largest number of counties in any judicial district in the state. It has just three district judges. Two of them sit in Lincoln County; one sits in McCook or Red Willow County. There is no sitting judge in Dawson County, which is the county in which Lexington is located, and that's something I would invite you to focus upon. The nearest district judge to Dawson County is 60 miles away. Why are we focusing on Lexington and on Dawson County? Well, simply because it has experienced the tremendous population growth that Senator Cudaback talked to you about, in fact it's 20 percent growth in population in ten years. For comparison purposes I would point out, and please don't, Senator Stuhr, or anyone else be concerned about this, but just to give you a comparison, Dawson County, without a district judge, is 60 percent larger than York County, which is the next largest county that has no district judge. At the committee hearing, law enforcement personnel testified as to the need for greater attention in Dawson County; they testified as to the high number of district court case filings. The abnormally high number of cases filed in Dawson County has exacerbated problems throughout the judicial district. The 2000 statewide average for judges' caseloads is 739 cases per judge. In the 11th judicial district the average is 991 cases per judge. That's a 250 case per judge difference. For the last two years, as Senator Cudaback mentioned, the Judicial Resources Commission has recommended that the number of district judges in the 11th judicial district be increased from three to four; your committee has unanimously advanced this bill to you for your consideration, and I would urge its adoption and advancement. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Chambers.